



## News Release

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### **Utah Reports First Human West Nile Case for 2006**

*Early Human Detection Means Everyone in Utah  
Should Take Precautions Now*

**(Salt Lake City, UT)** – Utah public health officials have reported that West Nile virus has been detected in a Utah County individual. This is the first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in Utah this season. The individual, who was not hospitalized, has recovered. The person falls within the age range of 18 to 39 years.

“The fact that WNV was detected in a person earlier this year than last year, emphasizes that now is the time to take precautions to avoid exposure to mosquitoes,” said Dr. Joseph Miner, health officer, Utah County Health Department. “This person was not elderly which is a reminder that the virus can cause disease in people of all ages.”

Exposure to WNV can occur anywhere, including at home. Mosquitoes often breed in backyards, wherever there is standing water. Preventing mosquito bites is the way to avoid getting WNV. Utahns can protect themselves from mosquito bites by:

- Using mosquito repellents that contain DEET when outdoors from dusk to dawn.
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants while outdoors.
- Getting rid of standing water around your house to reduce the number of mosquitoes (old tires, buckets, wading pools, etc.).

Officials say that increased temperatures can lead to more mosquitoes because high temperatures allow mosquitoes to mature more quickly. Mosquito populations will peak in the next few weeks as July ends so now is one of the most important times of the summer to wear DEET and take other measures to prevent mosquito bites.

- MORE -

## **Page 2 of 2 – Utah Reports First Human West Nile Case for 2006**

Earlier this month, WNV was detected in a horse in Emery County. “When West Nile virus is found in horses, it can mean an increased risk for humans too, because the virus is infecting more than just mosquitoes and birds,” said Lisa Wyman, epidemiologist, Utah Department of Health (UDOH).

As of July 19, WNV has been detected in five Utah counties including Duchesne, Emery, Salt Lake, Utah, and Washington. WNV has been found in 16 mosquito pools, 2 avian oral swabs, 5 sentinel chickens and 1 horse. A full list of detection broken out by county can be found online at: <http://health.utah.gov/epi/diseases/wnv>

Most people who are infected with WNV do not show any symptoms. About one in every five have flu-like symptoms with fever, muscle aches and possibly a rash. While those individuals recover, the illness can be prolonged. About one in 150 develop more severe illness affecting the brain and spinal cord. They may have headache, paralysis, and stiff neck, and may suffer long-lasting or permanent disability. The risk of severe illness increases with age, but all age groups are at risk of illness.

Staff from the UDOH and the Department of Agriculture and Food, along with local health departments, local mosquito abatement districts, and the Division of Wildlife Resources, are all collaborating to track and monitor WNV in Utah. Local mosquito abatement districts are working to reduce the number of mosquitoes that can spread the disease. They will continue these efforts throughout the 2006 mosquito season. For more information on WNV in Utah, visit [www.health.utah.gov/wnv](http://www.health.utah.gov/wnv).

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